

## Remarks

Applicant respectfully request reconsideration of this application as amended. Claims 1, 7 and 13 have been amended. No claims have been cancelled. Therefore, claims 1-18 are presented for examination.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as not falling within one of the four statutory categories of invention. Further, claims 7-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicant submits that claims 1 and 7 have been amended to appear in proper condition for allowance.

Claims 1-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogaki, U.S. Patent No. 6,771,383 (“Ogaki”) in view of Mei, U.S. Patent No. 6,236,831 (“Mei”) Douglin, U.S. Patent No. 6,619,695 (“Douglin”) Leinhos, U.S. Patent No. 5,721,813 (“Leinhos”) and Asao, U.S. Patent No. 7,066,460 (“Asao”). Applicant submits that the present claims are patentable over any combination of Ogaki, Mei, Douglin, Leinhos and Asao.

Ogaki discloses a mechanism adapted to create multi-page data consisting of image data of a plurality of pages that constitute one document, and to manage the multi-page data in the same stage as single-page data that consists of image data of each page belonging to the document. As a result, an image processing system is realized which can make use of both a single-page file suitable for management or updating of image data performed in units of one page, and a multi-page file suitable for processing of image data performed in units of one document. See Ogaki at Abstract.

Mei discloses a method and apparatus for recycling marking surfaces such as office paper is described. The system scans a marking surface, determines the location of printing

on the marking surface and deposits erasing material directly over the printing. Because the distribution of erasing material is confined to the printed areas, the use of erasing material is minimized. The described system can be easily adapted for use in traditional copying systems to recycle paper. See Mei at Abstract.

Douglin discloses a telecopier cover sheet comprising transparent membrane for legible marking thereon and at least one oppositely disposed membrane section assembled thereagainst and adapted for supporting a document therebetween. The transparent cover sheet allows a person sending the document by telecopier to create a writing that appears thereagainst in the telecopied mode and yet is subsequently erasable. The telecopy document is retained within the oppositely disposed membranes comprising the assembly to therein facilitate the handling and telecopying thereof. See Douglin at Abstract.

Leinhos discloses a method and system for arranging text for label printing that employs a label program operable to receive a data selection and a user interface operable to receive format parameters of a form. The data selection include at least one data block. The format parameters includes an array corresponding to a layout of the form. The label program is further operable to receive the format parameters from the user interface, to format an application file to conform to the format parameters, including a table of cells corresponding to the array, to transfer each data block to a cell of the table, and to print the application file to the form. See Leinhos at Abstract.

Asao discloses a sheet supply apparatus that supplies a sheet to an image forming apparatus. The sheet supply apparatus includes a sheet loading device for loading the sheet, a sheet stacking device for stacking the sheet to be loaded on the sheet loading device, a sheet feeding device provided at a front end of the sheet loading device in a sheet supplying

direction for feeding the sheet loaded on the sheet loading device, a sheet carrying device provided at a rear end of the sheet loading device in the sheet supplying direction for carrying the sheet stacked on the sheet stacking device into the sheet loading device, a sheet detecting device for detecting whether an image is formed on at least one side of the sheet loaded on the sheet loading device, and a supporting device for supporting the sheet loading device to be extractable from the apparatus. See Asao at Abstract.

Claim 1 of the present application recites optically examining an input separator page to determine if all machine readable regions on the input separator page have been obscured. Applicant submits that none of the cited references disclose or suggest this feature. However, the Office Action has cited Leinhos as disclosing this feature. See Office Action at Page 7, lines 10-14.

Applicant submits that Leinhos does not disclose or suggest optically examining a page to determine if all machine readable regions on the page have been obscured. Instead, Leinhos discloses determining a number of blank rows remaining on a sheet by subtracting a number of full rows from a number of rows of labels to be printed. Thus, Leinhos fails to disclose or suggest an *optical examination of a sheet*. Moreover, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Leinhos of implementing machine readable regions on a sheet. Therefore, there would be no reason to perform an operation of determining if machine readable regions on a sheet have been obscured.

Claim 1 of the present application also recites discarding an input separator page if all such machine readable regions on the input separator page have been obscured. The references cited in the Office Action also fail to disclose or suggest this feature. Nonetheless, the Office Action has cited Asao as disclosing this feature. See Office Action at Page 8, line 19 – Page 9, line 3. Applicant again disagrees. Nowhere in Asao is there disclosed or suggested

machine readable regions of a page that are obscured. Accordingly, there is no suggestion of an operation that discards a page if all such machine readable regions on the page have been obscured.

Because Ogaki, Mei, Douglin, Leinhos and Asao each fail to disclose or suggest optically examining an input separator page to determine if all machine readable regions on the input separator page have been obscured or discarding an input separator page if all such machine readable regions on the input separator page have been obscured, any combination of Ogaki, Mei, Douglin, Leinhos and Asao would necessarily fail to disclose or suggest such a feature. As a result, claim 1 and its respective dependent claims, are patentable over a combination of Ogaki, Mei, Douglin, Leinhos and Asao.

Independent claims 7 and 13 include limitations similar to those recited in claim 1. Thus claims 7 and 13, and their respective dependent claims, are also patentable over the combination of Ogaki, Mei, Douglin, Leinhos and Asao for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Applicant submits that the rejections have been overcome and that the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicant respectfully request the rejections be withdrawn and the claims be allowed.

The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at (303) 740-1980 if there remains any issue with allowance of the case.

Please charge any shortage to our Deposit Account No. 50-3669.

Respectfully submitted,

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